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JAPANESE OPERATIONAL ART IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

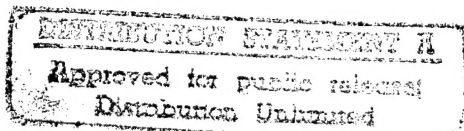
by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.



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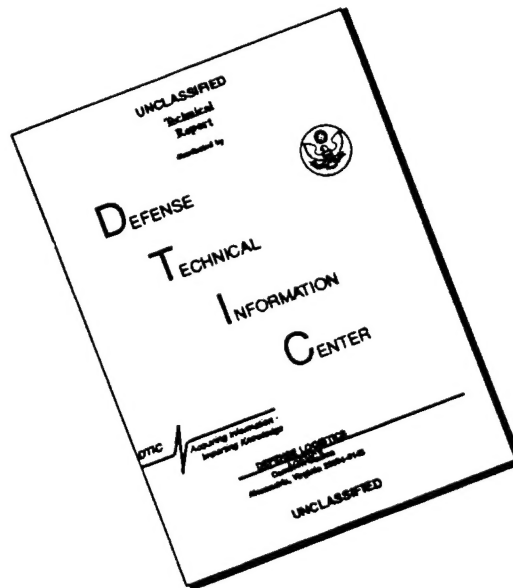
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## ABSTRACT

The Russo-Japanese War offers an almost unique opportunity to evaluate a campaign, fought by conventional means, in which the less powerful country was able to overcome its stronger adversary. The Japanese campaign provides numerous clear examples of the application of the fundamentals of operational design. Taking advantage of its geographic position, and through the execution of a well conceived military and political campaign, that included predetermined and limited military objectives, the Japanese were able to attain an advantage across the area of operations, and concluded a favorable negotiated peace. The Japanese were able to achieve their success, despite the Russians having initial superiority on land and at sea, and despite the Russian's original objective of total defeat and occupation of Japan.



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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Russo-Japanese War lasted from February 8, 1904, until September 5, 1905. It was the first major war of the twentieth century, and would have profound influence upon the planning of all major powers leading up to World War I. This war was the first truly modern war, in which machine guns and rapid fire artillery were employed in significant numbers, and witnessed the first major action at sea between fleets of modern armored warships. Military representatives from every major European power made their way to the theater of war, to observe and record the events as they unfolded. This paper draws upon the observations of some of those witnesses, as well as other secondary sources, both Japanese and Western, to examine Japanese operational design before and during the Japanese campaign, in order to derive conclusions and enduring lessons from this conflict.

## **STRATEGIC BACKGROUND AND THE THEATER OF WAR:**

In January 1904, as hostilities approached, world opinion was almost unanimous that the Japanese could not wage and win a war against Russia. This was based upon the premise that the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Russian Army and Navy, would inevitably lead to Russian victory. To overcome the numerical superiority of the Russian armed forces, Japan was forced to develop a campaign strategy designed to create, and or exploit, Russian weaknesses. The war itself was a clash of

interests, between two Imperial powers, each seeking to expand their territory and influence at the expense of their weak and tottering neighbors. War became inevitable once Russian territorial aggrandizement, came into conflict with Japanese territorial aspirations on the Korean Peninsula. Japan, had for centuries considered Korea of special interest to her security, and strongly desired that Korea remain solely within the Japanese sphere of influence. In 1895, Japan had gone to war with China with the intent of seizing control of Korea and the Liao-Tung Peninsula in southern Manchuria. Despite a quick victory over the Chinese, Japan was frustrated in its territorial aspirations by a coalition of European powers, including Russia. While Japan was supposedly granted a free hand in Korean affairs, it was forced to relinquish the Liao-Tung Peninsula back to China. The Japanese viewed the European intervention as a loss of prestige and as a national humiliation. The subsequent acquisition of the Liao-Tung Peninsula, and Port Arthur, by the Russians, as a concession from the Chinese, only amplified Japanese displeasure and incited great resentment toward the Russians. In the following years, Russian economic interests in the north of Korea and Russia's obstruction of Japanese political plans in Korea, led to the deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two powers and eventually led to the outbreak of war.

The **area of operations** included the Korean peninsula, the Liao-Tung Peninsula, southern Manchuria, and the adjoining seas; which consisted of the sea of Japan between the Korean Peninsula

and the Japanese home islands, and the Yellow Sea, which forms the body of water between the Liao-Tung Peninsula and mainland China (see Figure 2). The Korean peninsula is very mountainous, is about 400 miles long on the western side and averages about 100 miles in width<sup>1</sup>. There was only one rail line, recently completed by the Japanese, in southern Korea that ran from Fusong to Seoul. North of Seoul, roads were barely more than cart tracks, making the passage of large bodies of troops and transport a slow and arduous affair. Japanese Engineers, were heavily tasked throughout the theater during the war, in an attempt to improve the roads and rail behind Japanese lines, to facilitate supply and re-inforcement. Weather throughout the theater was temperate in the summer, with July and August being the hottest months, these months were also the rainy season, winters were cold and harsh<sup>2</sup>.

Southeastern Manchuria, like Korea, was very rugged and mountainous, with few good roads and limited passes through its eastern mountains. The old Mandarin road, was the only major road from Mukden to the Liao-Tung Peninsula and ran north-south, parallel with the mountains to the east, and heavily cultivated flatter land to the west. It was along the path of this road, that the Russians had extended a spur from the Trans-Siberian Railway, from Harbin to Port Arthur.

Russia relied upon the Trans-Siberian railway, as their sole line of communication across the Euro-Asian continent, to deploy forces to the theater (see Figure 1)<sup>3</sup> and despite the rail line,

Russian forces remained heavily dependent upon local sources of food. In contrast, Japan would enjoy **comparatively short and secure lines of communication** throughout the war, subject to their ability to obtain and maintain **control the seas** in the area of operations.

#### **THE JAPANESE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY:**

The Japanese **strategic goals** were; the occupation of Korea and the Liao-Tung Peninsula including Port Arthur, and the demilitarization of the remainder of Manchuria. The Japanese **operational plan** to achieve this, required the careful sequencing operations on land and sea<sup>4</sup>. The Japanese intended to make a total commitment of Japanese assets, to fight a limited war with limited operational goals. The Japanese objective was to take the offensive early, take as much territory as possible before the Russians could deploy sufficient forces to shift the balance of power, then seek a negotiated peace<sup>5</sup>.

In support of the military effort, Japan organized, armed, and funded numerous anti-Tsarist and anti-Russian organizations within the Russian Empire. The hope was that insurrection and unrest in European Russia would disrupt and **detract from Russian unity of effort**. If successful, it would be impossible for Russia to conduct a protracted war of the type that would be necessary to regain territory lost to the Japanese, early in the war. The Japanese also dispatched an old Harvard classmate of President Roosevelt, to Washington to request Roosevelt's assistance in

arranging a negotiated peace when the time was right.

Despite the war being fought in proximity to Japan, where it would have the **advantage of geographic position, and its line of supply being comparatively short**, it was essential to the execution of the Japanese campaign plan<sup>6</sup> that the Japanese Navy to seize at least temporary **control of the sea**. This was especially critical during the early phase of the war when Japanese Army forces were vulnerable to destruction at sea while being transported to the mainland. The Japanese, were acutely aware that **without control of the sea, they could not successfully prosecute the war**. The Japanese Field Army, was **Japan's operational center of gravity**, and could be defeated on land in a decisive engagement with Russian land forces, or at sea, by severing its sea lines of communication from its base of supply and operations in Japan. Thus the Navy's mission, was to operate against the Russian Navy, in such a fashion as to ensure that Japanese troops could be safely transported to Korea and Manchuria, and to **maintain the security of the Japanese Army's sea lines of communication to Japan**.

The Japanese Naval Minister, Admiral Yamamoto, recognized that the Japanese Navy was no match for the combined strength of the Russian Navy. The balance of Naval power in the far east, already in question, was in danger of tipping heavily in favor of the Russians. The Russians had dispatched a re-inforcing squadron enroute to the far east, with additional deployments planned. If the Japanese were to have any hope of success in the war, they

would need to strike while there remained hope of seizing at least **temporary control of the sea**<sup>7</sup>.

During the campaign, the **sector of main effort**, was to be against the Russian Manchurian Army, which was expected to be concentrating in the area around Liaoyang<sup>8</sup>. In the campaign's first phase, the Japanese 1st Army, was to land on the Korean Peninsula and establish a **forward base of operations** near Seoul. If **control of the sea** was attained, it would land at Chemulpo (modern Inchon), half way up the western side of the Korean peninsula near Seoul. If sea control was not attained, then Japanese forces would land at Fusan on the southeastern tip of the Korean peninsula. Once established on the Peninsula, the Japanese 1st Army was to push north along the western edge of Korea to the Yalu river and form the eastern pincer of **converging lines of operation**, on the main Russian Army near Liaoyang.

In the next phase of the campaign, the Japanese 2nd Army, was to land on the Liao-Tung Peninsula<sup>9</sup>. The 2nd Army would be transported from a forward staging base near Seoul, to the **naval forward base of operations in the Elliot Islands**, off the east coast of the Liao-Tung Peninsula. The Japanese transports would shelter in the lee of the Elliot Islands, until it was safe to commence landing. The Japanese Navy was expected to ensure local sea control during the landing by confining the Russian Navy to the area around Port Arthur (see Figure 3). Once firmly established ashore, the 2nd Army, in a repeat of Japan's 1895 success, would quickly capture Port Arthur, denying use of the



port to the Russian Navy, and avenging the humiliation of 1895. The 2nd Army, would then move north on the Liao-Tung Peninsula, converging upon the main Russian Army from the south and west. The combined armies would then execute Oyama's plan to **envelop and destroy the Russian Manchurian army at Liaoyang<sup>10</sup>**, to be followed by negotiation of a favorable peace.

#### **JAPANESE EXECUTION - THE HISTORICAL CAMPAIGN:**

##### **Naval Operations in 1904 and the Role of Port Arthur -**

On February 8, 1904, Admiral Togo, the Navy Operational Commander, launched a surprise night attack against the Russian Fleet, while it was at anchor, outside the harbor at Port Arthur. He hoped to inflict a crippling blow to the Russian Fleet and reduce its strength sufficiently to give Japan local sea control, and allow the army to be safely landed in Korea. The attack, although completely successful in terms surprise, had limited success inflicting physical damage to the Russian Fleet. Yet, the attack did strike a **severe psychological blow** to the Russian Pacific fleet from which it never fully recovered. After the initial attack, Togo decided that his best strategy was to **avoid a general engagement**, and minimize the risk of the losses to his squadron, losses that could not be afforded or replaced<sup>11</sup>. Upon filing his report, on the initial stage of his operation, Togo informed the Naval Ministry, that his intention was to confine the Russian fleet to Port Arthur and not let it escape to Vladivostock, he would **not seek a decisive sea engagement to get**

command of the sea<sup>12</sup>.

From his advance base of operations in the Elliot Islands, Togo operated on **interior lines** against the divided naval forces of the Russians. The Russian Pacific squadron was divided between Port Arthur and Vladivostock. Vladivostock was **ineffective as a Naval base due to its position, removed from the main area of effort** and being ice bound part of the year. **Port Arthur was an ideal base of operations for the Russian fleet to operate against Japanese SLOCs**, however, **it's weakness** was that it was at the end of a peninsula where it could **easily be isolated by the land from outside support**. If the Russians attempted to sortie from Port Arthur, he planned to block the attempt with his heavy units, and attempt to influence them to return to Port Arthur. At the same time, he sought to keep the Russian Cruiser squadron in Vladivostock, from either operating against Japanese SLOC's or from joining up with the Port Arthur squadron<sup>13</sup>.

The Russian's believed their main hope lay in maintaining the strength of the Pacific squadron until re-inforcements arrived from Europe. The Russians rationalized their position, by drawing upon Mahan's concept, then in vogue, of a **"fleet in being"** or **"fortress fleet"**. The Russians believed that the importance of the fleet still resided in its contribution to the **defense of the fortress, rather than in its ability to challenge for control of the sea**<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, as eloquently noted by Mahan, "the Russian fleet lie like cattle, supinely in Port Arthur, and allowed its throat to be cut". Had the Russians

chosen to come out and go down fighting, they must have inflicted some damage upon the Japanese fleet, or may have fought their way clear to open seas. Instead they remained in port, eventually to be destroyed by the Japanese Army, with its siege guns.

By remaining in Port Arthur, the Russian fleet **did add an important operational objective**, to what otherwise would have been primarily a political objective<sup>15</sup>. The siege of Port Arthur, evolved into a **branch in the Japanese operational plan**, that assumed increased importance due to the unexpected intensity of the resistance by the defending land forces and the presence of the Russian fleet. Port Arthur was a **secondary sector of effort**, that would influence the outcome of the battles being fought in the main sector of effort to the north. The Japanese were compelled to take Port Arthur, prior to the arrival of Russian naval re-inforcement, in order to **protect the lines of communication of their own center of gravity**. Also, as long as Port Arthur held out, the Japanese would **not have unity of effort** on land, due to the **dual operational objectives** of, the Russian Manchurian Field army and the Naval Base at Port Arthur<sup>16</sup>. In the end, the value of Port Arthur was that it had protected the Russian fleet<sup>17</sup> and forced a division of Japanese strength<sup>18</sup>. It cost the Japanese 3rd Army, 60,000 casualties and diverted almost 200,000 Japanese troops away from operations in the main sector of effort against the Russian Army in Manchuria<sup>19</sup>. The **protracted siege, possibly prevented the Japanese from attaining their planned decisive victory at Liaoyang**<sup>20</sup>.

### Operations from War Declaration to the Battle of Liaoyang -

Initially, the campaign proceeded according to Japanese plans<sup>21</sup>. On February 17th, the Japanese 1st Army landed at Chemulpo and by the 25th of February, Japanese infantry had moved north to Pyongyang<sup>22</sup>. As ice began to break in the Northern ports along the Korean coast, the Japanese moved their landing points north from Inchon, to a new **forward base of operations** near Chinampo. **The early movement of Japanese troops north, was impeded solely by their ability to supply themselves.** On April 4th, the Japanese had reached the southern bank of the Yalu river, thus it the Japanese required almost 6 weeks to move 130 miles from Chinampo to the Yalu, due primarily to the difficulty of transport and supply along the way.

The basic theme of the Japanese plan at the Battle of the Yalu (see Figure 4), would be repeated throughout the campaign. A Japanese assault along the Russian center, designed to hold it in place, while executing a flanking maneuver to envelop the Russian position<sup>23</sup>. With victory at Yalu, **Japan had obtained it's first objective of the war, the occupation of Korea.**

While the 1st Army had been moving north, the 2nd Army had been **deployed to its forward staging base** near Seoul. On May 1st, in **synchronization** with the Japanese start of the Battle of the Yalu, the Japanese 2nd Army **moved aboard its transports to shelter at the advance naval base** in the Elliot Islands<sup>24</sup>. The Japanese 1st Army crossed the Yalu and moved north, taking a strong defensive position on the Russian eastern flank, until the

Japanese 2nd Army was completely ashore. The advantages of the 1st Army advancing north over the Yalu, was that it would be in a position difficult for the Russians to attack, while also being in position to threaten the flank of any relieving force the Russians might send to the Liao-Tung peninsula<sup>25</sup>.

On May 5th, the 2nd Army commenced an unopposed landing on the Liao-Tung peninsula. Togo **screened the landing, by conducting a diversionary attack** against the Russian Fleet in Port Arthur, and by setting up a dummy minefield in the fairway between the Elliot Islands and the peninsula. The 2nd Army quickly isolated the Kuan-Tung peninsula from the north, severing direct communication between Port Arthur and Liaoyang. The 2nd Army proceeded to invest Port Arthur, then moved north until meeting and defeating the Russians at the Battle of Tellisu<sup>26</sup>.

Soon after Telissu, the Japanese 4th Army, landed near Takushan on the Manchurian coast, south of Liaoyang, and served as a linkage between the previously divided Japanese Armies<sup>27</sup>. The three Japanese armies then **began to cooperate as they moved north and continued with operations designed to converge on and envelop** the main Russian force concentrated near Liaoyang<sup>28</sup> (see Figure 5).

The course of the campaign was in some ways being shaped by the terrain. The Japanese, operating along the Korean and Manchurian coasts, and on the Liao-Tung Peninsula, were mainly supplied by sea. The Russians, in the central position, were forced to stay close to the railway to maintain itself in supply,

and to protect reinforcements debarking as they arrived from Europe. By the end of July, the Russian Army had grown to the point where it was **beyond Kuropatkin's effective span of control** and was accordingly re-organized into the 1st and 2nd Manchurian Armies<sup>29</sup>. The ultimate aim of the Japanese, remained the **destruction of the Russian operational center of gravity, the Russian Manchurian field army**, however, the capture of Port Arthur and the **destruction of the Russian fleet taking shelter there, remained a critical point** that influenced the prosecution of the Japanese campaign<sup>30</sup>. As the Japanese advanced into southern Manchuria, they were being increasingly stretched between these two major operational objectives.

Despite the unexpectedly determined defense of Port Arthur, the campaign continued to unfold essentially as the Japanese had planned. The Japanese had maintained a relatively high rate of **operational tempo**, staying on the offensive and keeping the Russians on the retreat. The individual armies were able to continually press forward and maintained their **operational momentum** driving numerically superior Russian advance forces back toward Liaoyang. The Japanese lines of operation were converging on Liaoyang, and for the first time 3 Japanese field armies would be fighting together in a single battle. Unfortunately for Japan, the Japanese 3rd army was still conducting the siege of Port Arthur and was not available at Liaoyang<sup>31</sup>.

The Battle was fought between 25 August and 3 September, and was a Japanese victory, but not the decisive victory for which

they had hoped and planned<sup>32</sup> (see Figure 6). The primary reasons that the Japanese failed to attain their operational objective of enveloping and destroying the Russian army at Liaoyang, was that the Russians had been able to bring more men to the area of operations on the Trans-Siberian railway, than was originally believed possible and that Port Arthur had held out longer than was expected, and therefore kept the 3rd Army away from the main sector of effort.

#### Operations from Liaoyang to Mukden:

The Japanese campaign had fallen short of its goal of a decisive victory at Liaoyang and now entered into a **campaign sequel or sequential phase**. Up to the end of the battle of Liaoyang the Japanese had been repeatedly the active or offensive force, and the Russians the passive, or defensive force. Operations had been a succession of intermittent but successful Japanese offensive actions, resulting in steady advances by the Japanese. After Liaoyang, Oyama realized that his forces **needed an extended pause to rest and regain their strength**, recoup their losses, and bring forward their supplies<sup>33</sup>. By the middle of September, the Japanese were able to consolidate their lines of communication, completely repairing and re-bridging the route along the Mandarin road and the Russian railroad, significantly improving their ability to move supplies north. However, the Japanese **operational pause** after Liaoyang, had allowed the **Russians to seize the initiative** and they assumed the offensive

at the Battle of the Sha-ho<sup>34</sup>.

Operationally, the Battle of Sha-ho (see Appendix 4 and Figure 7) was a Russian defeat, for it failed to drive the Japanese back and did not relieve the pressure on Port Arthur. The main effect of the battle was another psychological boost for Japanese forces and a correspondingly depressing effect on Russian forces.

The Battle of Sha-Ho provides an excellent opportunity to examine the **contrast in operational leadership** of the opposing Commanders. Oyama was a master of centralized planning and decentralized execution. **Oyama's operational leadership** was characterized by delegation, issuing general orders to the army as a whole, as the tide of battle dictated. He assigned specific duties, responsibilities or objectives, then allowed subordinates to execute their tasks without interference. His role was limited to assembling an Operational Reserve and sending re-inforcements to the Commanders in the field, to provide them the means to execute their orders<sup>35</sup>. At the Sha-Ho, Oyama, did not leave Liaoyang until October 10th, halfway through the battle. Once he approached the front, he remained in constant telephone communication with his Army Commander's Headquarters, through whom he coordinated the whole line of the front. He rarely had any units under his direct command, and once the units that were under his direct command engaged the enemy, he rarely attempted to interfere with details of the battle<sup>36</sup>. At Sha-Ho, **each Japanese Army was given a specific task to perform during the**



battle, the method by which it was to be executed was left entirely up to the individual Army Commanders.

In juxtaposition, throughout the campaign, Kuropatkin was near the front and sometimes bypassed his army Commanders to communicate with tactical portions of the Russian army. He often sought to meddle in individual tactical actions, instead of remaining detached and effectively coordinating the movements of the whole army. Many of his orders were sent by courier, at times vaguely written or contradictory, contributing to the confusion in the Russian lines. This sometimes resulted in units remaining inactive when they were supposed to attack, while others marched and countermarched, from one side of the battle to the other, without ever effectively engaging the enemy. Thus Kuropatkin frequently failed to remain at the operational level<sup>37</sup>.

After the Sha-ho, there was another operational pause, during which neither the Russians or the Japanese were capable of conducting significant offensive operations. The Japanese would prove unable to pursue further offensive actions until after the fall of Port Arthur, due to lack of reserves and bad weather. Consequently, the Japanese forward positions were constructed to facilitate an active defense and the Japanese 7th Division, was sent to assist the 3rd army at Port Arthur<sup>38</sup>.

On the Russian side, supplies had become strained as local sources of food became unreliable, reserve stocks were consumed and with the onset of winter, the need for winter clothing could not be fully met<sup>39</sup>. During the pause, Russian forces were again

re-organized, this time into 3 field armies, as span of control became increasingly difficult, as new Russian units continued to arrive in theater<sup>40</sup>.

It was during this second operational pause in Manchuria, that Port Arthur finally fell to the Japanese. Port Arthur's capitulation, gave Japan **temporary undisputed sea control**, added to Japanese prestige at home and abroad, gave Togo the opportunity to effect much needed repairs to his ships before the arrival of the Baltic Fleet, meant the Baltic Fleet had only one Port of destination, and most importantly, **released the Japanese 3rd Army to join operations with the main army, near Mukden**<sup>41</sup>. The fall of Port Arthur changed the operational scheme of the campaign. The Russians were no longer compelled to attempt to relieve pressure on Port Arthur. The Japanese now had **unity of effort** for their forces, and the Japanese could resume offensive operations, as soon as the 3rd army recovered and moved north.

On January 22nd, demonstrations in front of Winter Palace had ended in bloodshed and Russian officials were becoming desperate for good news from the front, to help improve the mood of the people and help stem the tide of civil unrest<sup>42</sup>. Kuropatkin was aware of this, and with a series of options available, chose to attempt another offensive<sup>43</sup>. Attack was the correct decision, retreat would lengthen Japanese supply lines, but would have had a negative impact on the already shaky morale of his army, and meant the politically unacceptable abandonment of Mukden without a fight. Attack would also take advantage of

the most positive balance of forces, that could be foreseen for quite a period of time. The ensuing Battle of San-de-pu, was to be the last attempt by the Russians to turn the tide of the campaign, and was characterized by its bloodiness, yet resulted in essentially no change in position being attained by either side<sup>44</sup>.

The stage was now set for Mukden, the final and greatest land battle of the war. This was to be a Japanese maximum effort to attain the enveloping and decisive victory that had been the original object of their plans and which had eluded them at Liaoyang<sup>45</sup>. Striking now was imperative, spring was not far away and would soon turn the plains into mud and make rivers unfordable, making offensive operations increasingly difficult. Also, the Russian Baltic fleet was approaching, with uncertain effect upon Japanese SLOCs<sup>46</sup>.

By February 18th, the Japanese were ready, the 3rd Army had re-deployed to the area north of Liaoyang, and the newly established Japanese 5th Army (Yalu), had been positioned on the Japanese extreme right flank<sup>47</sup>. Critical to the Japanese operational plan at Mukden (see appendix 6 and map 8), was success of Japanese **operational deception** and the **synchronization of Japanese forces** throughout the battle. The plan, which was well conceived, was designed to only gradually reveal it's true strength, disposition, and true point of attack. The Japanese planned their first attack in the east, to draw off the Russian operational reserve, followed by a major effort to envelop the

Russians in the west. The center of the Russian line was not to be attacked until induced to pull back from its prepared positions, into open terrain, by the flanking attacks. Once the Russians had withdrawn from their prepared fortified positions, there would be a general attack with the intent of enveloping both Russian flanks<sup>48</sup>.

The Japanese 5th Army was to be the first to attack in the east, against the Russian left flank, followed by the 4th Army's attack on the Russian right flank. The 1st and 2nd Armies when directed, would attack the Russian center. The last and most important aspect of the plan, was the movement and attack of the concealed 3rd Army against the Russian extreme right, in an attempt to turn the Russian right flank, envelop the Russians and cut their line of communication. However, the wide wheeling attack demanded of the 3rd army turned out to be beyond its capability to execute, despite Oyama's commitment of the Japanese operational reserve to the enveloping effort. In this era just prior to mechanical transport, all movement was by foot. Due to this lack of maneuver speed, the Japanese were unable to turn the Russian retreat into a rout, and the defeated Russian forces were able extract themselves from the battle and to withdraw from the field despite suffering heavy losses.

At Mukden, the Japanese had attacked a numerically superior enemy and forced it from a entrenched position, driven it in disorder from a second, and compelled it to retreat one hundred miles. Yet, the Japanese had advanced as far as their resources

and supply lines would allow, the Japanese undoubtedly reached their **culminating point** sometime during the Battle of Mukden, and now could only eagerly hope for, and actively seek peace<sup>49</sup>.

#### **TSUSHIMA AND WAR TERMINATION:**

On May 27, 1905, the naval battle at Tsushima took place. The result was the destruction of the Russian Baltic fleet, the end of Russia as a first class naval power and guarantee of permanent control of the seas and security of it's SLOCS for the Japanese. The Japanese victory at Tsushima had its greatest effect in Moscow, where the Russian governing nobility, who had previously steadfastly supported the war now urged peace. The cumulative **damage** to Russian prestige resulting from Mukden and Tsushima, as well as **to the will of the Russian people**, proved to **be terminal** and made peace negotiations possible. On June 9th, President Roosevelt, called on the belligerents to open direct peace negotiations<sup>50</sup>. Peace negotiations commenced on August 9th and peace terms were concluded September 5th. At the wars end, the Russian Field Army in Manchuria was about 470,000 men, whereas Japanese strength was estimated at 300,000 men. The balance of power seemed to have clearly shifted to the Russian Army in the field and Japan was reaching the point of exhaustion of its financial resources and its ability to send men to the field. There were several reasons why the Russians accepted an uneven peace. At the **operational level**, there was serious dissension in the ranks, large numbers of troops in the field had

low morale and only wanted to go home, and the limit of Trans-Siberian railway had been reached, and could not long support and maintain so large an army. More important though, at the **strategic level, the Russian center of gravity had been defeated.** The Russian nation was now tired of a war that was never popular, and the **will of the Russian people had collapsed.** The Russian Empire was in danger of being torn apart by grave internal political revolt that threatened to overthrow Tsar Nicholas II and the Romanov dynasty.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED:**

##### **Conclusions -**

1. Strategically and operationally, the war was a Japanese victory, yet the Russian Manchurian Army Group was more powerful at war's end than at its beginning.
2. The Japanese repeatedly used frontal attacks to pin the enemy and reduce his ability to respond to flanking attacks.
3. Frontal attacks against well prepared positions usually failed and only generated large casualties.
4. Heavy field guns were critical to the capture of heavily fortified positions, especially Port Arthur.
5. Russian forces were hampered by the absence of unity of effort within its command structure<sup>51</sup>.
6. The effectiveness and lethality of the machine gun was proven throughout the campaign and came into greater demand and use as the campaign wore on.

7. Aerial Reconnaissance would have been invaluable but saw only limited use by either side.
8. Final Japanese victory was due to the collapse of the will of the Russian people
9. Control of the sea was essential to allow the movement of Japanese troops safely to Korea and China without which, it could not conduct the war.
10. The timing of the commencement of hostilities was an important contribution to the Japanese campaign<sup>52</sup>.
11. The Japanese campaign plan was always one of limited war, it did not envision a conflict ending in the overthrow of the Russian government by force of arms.
12. The Japanese had reached their culminating point, but were able to convince the Russians that they had more to lose by continuing the conflict than by making peace<sup>53</sup>.
13. Port Arthur was a double edged sword for both the Russians and the Japanese<sup>54</sup>.
14. The Japanese Navy lost more ships to mines than to Naval action.
15. It was essential to the success of the Japanese campaign that they destroy the Russian fleet with minimal naval losses.
16. For strategic political reasons, the Russians could not bring to theater the weight of their best land forces<sup>55</sup>.
17. The Russians delayed in mobilizing reserves for the far east and in any event, the poor quality of initial reserves sent to the front contributed to early Russian defeats.

18. The war was fought over territory that belonged to neither power, Russia's true interests were so limited that enlisting the will of the Russian people in a protracted conflict was unlikely.

19. The geographic division of the Russian fleet between Vladivostock and Port Arthur was a potential strength that the Russians never exploited and the Japanese succeeded in neutralizing.

20. The long and narrow line of supply of the Russians, was a critical vulnerability that limited the ability of the Russians to deploy forces to the field, as well as determined the maximum forces that could be supported in the theater.

21. Feeding the Russian army depended upon local resources, which were vulnerable to disruption from local population, and which for the most part supported the Japanese<sup>56</sup>.

22. The Japanese campaign plan was based upon their ability to exploit their temporary regional Naval and Land superiority.

23. The Japanese deliberately chose to attack the will of the Russian people, hoping they would not support a war that involved high costs and casualties for territories far away and of no historical importance to Russia, and by inciting and funding revolutionary activities in the Russian Empire.

24. The Russian prejudice and bigotry, viewed the Japanese as an inferior culture, people and power that would be easily defeated.

25. The Japanese successfully manipulated world opinion to support them, they created the image of an embattled and chivalrous Japan versus the bullying and oppressive Russians.



26. The Japanese fought for pre-determined limited goals and initiated peace talks as soon as possible.
27. Russian infantry tactics were antiquated.
28. The Japanese reconnaissance effort and intelligence net was excellent compared to that of the Russians<sup>57</sup>.
29. The Japanese utilized local Chinese forces with some success as unconventional forces and intelligence gatherers in the Russian rear areas and against the Russian line of communication.
30. The Russians put too much faith in the concept of a "fleet in being/fortress fleet", ending to its uncompensated destruction<sup>58</sup>.
31. "Knowing your enemy", is of great advantage, Admiral Togo was a student of Russian Naval, and especially, Makarov's tactics.
32. The Japanese correctly ignored Russian naval raids on Hokaido, as they had insufficient naval forces available to detail to hunting down the Russian ships. All ships were needed to guard their supply lines and to invest Port Arthur<sup>59</sup>.
33. The Russian army was tied to the railway line from Harbin to Port Arthur, as the only way it could be supplied and reinforced. There were no road systems sufficient to serve as alternate routes of advancement, retreat or supply for their forces. Thus the main line of attack and defence was predetermined.
34. Russian field artillery and heavy transports for the most part could not traverse the hill roads of Manchuria<sup>60</sup>.
35. The Japanese were compelled to attack Port Arthur to get at the Russian fleet, before the combined Russian Fleets could prove powerful enough to defeat the Japanese fleet<sup>61</sup>.

36. The inability of the Japanese to effect the coup de grace after each successive defeat of the Russians, due to exhaustion, and over extension, can be attributed to the absence of the 3rd Army, tied down around Port Arthur. But even at Mukden, the final envelopment failed due to the inability of the 3rd Army to complete the maneuver.

37. Mahan, believed the war validated the superiority of the Battleship, and discredited submarines and torpedo boats<sup>62</sup>.

38. The Russians lost control of the sea due to the division of their fleet, combined with the unacceptable delays re-inforcing their Pacific squadron.

39. Battleships should be armed with the maximum number of big guns, smaller calibre guns are irrelevant<sup>63</sup>.

40. The speed of Togo's ships at Tsushima, had proven critical to allowing the Japanese to maintain the long range they wanted to fight at, as well as allowing them to cross the Russian "T"<sup>64</sup>.

41. "There is extreme danger to remain in fixed positions, in the face of modern weapons, only mobility offers the means to escape destruction. The Russians overcrowded their trenches and accordingly sustained heavy casualties from artillery"<sup>65</sup>.

43. Local residents can be used as sources of intelligence if properly motivated<sup>66</sup>.

44. The area of operations was too remote to be considered of vital national interest by a majority of the Russian populace. This was in stark contrast to its vital importance in the minds of the Japanese people.

45. Both armies were too large to be controlled as a single army under one commander, and both armies were required to re-organize their forces in the field as they became too large.

46. The Japanese successfully employed field telephones and telegraph to maintain communication between the operational commander and the forces in the field.

**Lessons learned:**

1. No matter the desire, the will and the valor of your troops, insufficient operational mobility can make the best conceived of operational plans impossible to execute.

2. Reconnaissance of enemy forces, by both conventional and unconventional methods is essential. Knowledge of the battlefield and your enemy's dispositions can decide the outcome of the conflict.

3. Strategic and Operational Logistical support is critical to maximizing your force's capabilities. The ability to rapidly deploy forces to the theater of operations and to sustain operational forces in the field, may ultimately determine the outcome of the conflict.

4. A clear concise chain of command is critical to the war effort. Without unity of command; dissension, conflicting orders and confusion will undermine combat effectiveness.

5. The support of the people is critical to the morale of the armed forces and the ability of the government to effectively prosecute any prolonged military operation.

6. Mine Warfare can make a major contribution to shaping the nature of a Naval actions.
7. The value of the ultimate objectives of the war, to the people of each nation, will determine their support of the government and the sacrifice that they are willing to make to win the war.
8. Control of the sea, where sea lanes of communication are involved, is a critical aspect of the land campaign and can mean the difference between possible victory and sure defeat.
9. Timing and synchronization of both military and political initiatives, before and at the commencement of hostilities can influence the outcome of the campaign.
10. It is possible for a weaker power to defeat a stronger power, through combination of limited war, advantage of geographic position and psychological and political manipulation.
11. Span of control limits the size of forces that can remain under the direct control of a single commander. Electronic communications capability, will play a critical role in the coordination and the unity of effort of large modern forces.
12. In a protracted conflict, a country's main battle fleet should not be divided. Any adversary with Sea LOCs will have them throughout the war, not only for the amount of time necessary to reposition a concentrated fleet<sup>67</sup>.

### KEY EVENTS

8 Feb 1904	Attack on Russian Fleet at Port Arthur
30 Apr - 1 May 1904	Battle of the Yalu
14-15 Jun 1904	Battle of Telissu
10 Aug 1904	Naval Battle of the Yellow Sea
25 Aug - 3 Sep 1904	Battle of Liaoyang
5 - 18 Oct 1904	Battle of the Sha-Ho
6 Dec 1904	203 Meter Hill captured
9 Dec 1904	Russian Pacific Squadron destroyed
5 Jan 1905	Port Arthur surrenders to Japanese
26 - 27 Jan 1905	Battle of Sandepu
21 Feb - 10 Mar 1905	Battle of Mukden
27 - 28 May 1905	Naval Battle at Tsushima
5 Sep 1905	Peace Terms agreed at Portsmouth, NH

### Appendix-1

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### JAPANESE:

**General Oyama** - Japanese Army, Chief of Staff

**Major General Kodama** - Oyama's Chief of Staff

**Admiral Yamamoto** - Navy Minister

**Admiral Togo** - Japanese Operational Fleet Commander

**Baron Komura** - Japanese Foreign Minister

**General Kuroki** - Commander Japanese 1st Army

**General Oku** - Commander Japanese 2nd Army

**General Nogi** - Commander Japanese 3rd Army

**General Nodzu** - Commander Japanese 4th Army

**Lieutenant General Kawamura** - Commander Japanese 5th Army (Yalu)

### RUSSIANS:

**Sergei Witte** - Russian Statesman and advisor to the Tsar; former minister of transport and finance minister.

**Admiral Alekseev** - Viceroy of the Far East, overall commander of Russian forces in the far east until recalled

**General Kuropatkin** - Minister of War (1903), CINC of Russian land forces in the far east until Battle of Mukden

**General Linievich** - CINC after Kuropatkin, appointed after Mukden

**General Gripenburg** - Commander 2nd Manchurian Army

**General Kaulbars** - Commander 3rd Manchurian Army

**Lieutenant General Samsonov** - Cavalry Commander Right Wing

**Major General Rennenkampf** - Cavalry Commander Left Wing

**Lieutenant General Stoessel** - Governor and Commander of the Port Arthur Fortress

**Major General Smirnov** - Garrison Commander at Port Arthur

**Major General Kondratenko** - Commander of the land defenses at Port Arthur

**Major General Fock** - Commander of the land defenses at Port Arthur after General Kondratenko's death.

**Vice Admiral Stark** - Commander of Russian Pacific Squadron at Port Arthur when war started.

**Vice Admiral Makarov** - Relieved Admiral Stark as Commander of Russian Pacific Squadron in Port Arthur following Japanese surprise attack

**Rear Admiral Witgeft** - Commander of the Russian Pacific Squadron after Makarov's death until killed at Battle of the Yellow Sea

**Rear Admiral Viren** - Commander of Russian Pacific Squadron after Witgeft's death

**Vice Admiral Rozhestvensky** - Commander of Russian Baltic Squadron sent to the far east.

**Lieutenant General Zasulich** - Commander of Russian forces at Yalu

**Lieutenant General Stakelburg** - Commander 1st Siberian Corps at Telissu

## OPPOSING ARMIES AT THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN

### JAPANESE:

1rst Army	General Kuroki	3 Divisions, 2 Brigades, 2 Reg
2nd Army	General Oku	4 Divisions, 1 Brigade
3rd Army	General Nogi	3 Divisions, 2 Brigades
4th Army	General Nodzu	3 Divisions, Heavy Artillery
5th Army	LtGen Kawamura	2 Divisions, 1 Brigade, 1 Reg
General Reserve		3 Brigades

Also 2 Cavalry Brigades, one operating on each Flank.

### RUSSIAN:

1rst Manchurian Army	General Linievich	4 Corps + Cavalry
2nd Manchurian Army	General Grippenburg	3 Corps
3rd Manchurian Army	General Kaulbars	4 Corps
General Reserve		3 Corps

### Total Combatant Strengths at Mukden:

<u>Japanese</u>		<u>Russian</u>
200,000	Infantry	276,000
7,300	Cavalry	16,000
1,000	Artillery	1,200
254	Machine Guns	54

### CASUALTIES<sup>68</sup>

15,892	Dead	20,000+
59,612	Wounded	49,000+

Appendix-3



### The Battle of the Sha-Ho

The Russians, despite repeated defeats on the battlefield, were gaining confidence. The Russian army had not only made up its losses at Liaoyang, but had actually increased in size<sup>69</sup>. It appeared to Kuropatkin, that it was time for the Russians to attack before the stream of Japanese reinforcements could arrive on the field, and before Port Arthur would fall and allow the Japanese 3rd army to be re-deployed<sup>70</sup>. It was important to make an effort to relieve the pressure on Port Arthur, in hope that the ships there could be preserved until the Baltic fleet could arrive. thus the Russians attempted to conduct offensive operations<sup>71</sup>. The Russian advance which began on the October 5th was the greatest offensive effort made by the Russians during the war. The main objective was to defeat General Kuroki's 1st army and to push it backwards. The western force was essentially a containing force with the object of attacking the main strength of the Japanese to pin it, so that the Japanese 1st army could be defeated. The flaw in the Russian plan, was that the main attack would go against the Japanese right flank in hilly mountainous terrain, easily defendable, and where the Japanese held the superiority in mountain artillery, and the Russians were unable to effectively utilize their advantage in cavalry. They also exposed themselves to counterattack by the Japanese forces from the Japanese left flank, where the ground was flatter. The Japanese counter-attack threatened to cut the Russian line of communication and threatened the isolation the Russian eastern

force. The Japanese counterattack, might be more dangerous to the Russians than the original Russian attack was to the Japanese.

The Russian attack was not made against Oyama's principal **line of communication** along the railway. Thus the attack was not necessarily against the **Japanese operational center of gravity**, or in this case the **operational-tactical center of gravity**, which would have been better identified as the combined second and fourth armies. A successful attack by the Russians in the east, would only have the effect of driving the Japanese Army, toward the west, where it would join up with the 2nd and 4th Armies along the Japanese main line of communication<sup>72</sup>.

Oyama, from the moment that he realized that the Russians were advancing to attack, took actions to regain the initiative. In response to the Russian attack in the east, the 1st Army went on the offensive and tried to advance, the 4th Army applied pressure against center of the Russian main force, pinning it and pushing back it back on its main line of communication, and the 2nd army was to swept out to the west and tried to envelop the Russian right flank. The Russian main attack in the east failed against the Japanese 1st Army, and in concert with the Japanese counter-attack, resulted in the Russian abandonment of their offensive and subsequent retirement. Across the entire battle field the Japanese armies had advanced, and the Russian armies, despite having a significant majority in manpower, had witnessed a change from an offensive advance, to the defense, to retreat.

#### Appendix-4

## THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU

The Russian's attempted an envelopment of Japanese left flank in combination with a frontal assault. However, the offensive was not engaged along the whole front and the point of attack was not seriously pressed. The Japanese were still in a defensive posture, awaiting the 3rd Army, before resuming another offensive thrust. The battle as executed, was simply an attack on the Japanese left wing, with the Japanese remaining in fortified positions all along the front, and meeting the Russian attack with the Japanese Operational Reserve, supported by units from the center and right wing in a direct counter-attack. The battle was another poorly coordinated, half-hearted attempt at an offensive, executed by only a portion of the Russian force. The Russian cavalry raid of a few days earlier, might have been more effective had it been executed in synchronization with a more determined Russian advance at San-de-pu<sup>73</sup>.

## THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN

The majority of the Japanese 3rd Army was kept carefully concealed, positioned behind the Japanese 4th Army on the Japanese left flank. The 11th Division of the 3rd Army, was attached to the 5th Army on the Japanese right flank. When the 5th Army advanced it was reported by Russian forces, that elements of the 3rd army were advancing on the Japanese right. This led to the belief that the entire 3rd and 5th armies were on the move on the Russian left, and induced the shift in the Russian operational reserve to that flank, just as Oyama hoped<sup>74</sup>.

With the shift in Reserves the 3rd Army went forward in an all out attack against the Russian far right flank. Japanese attacks in the west forced the entire Russian line back at right angle to its original position. Japanese Cavalry diversionary raids against the railway north of Mukden led to detachment of additional Russian units from the main area of effort, while attacks against the Russian center and left, kept them from sending major re-inforcement to the Russian right wing. In hope of overwhelming the Russian right, Oyama committed the Japanese operational reserve was to the enveloping action on March 4th.

By March 7th, the Japanese 3rd army was North and only 4 miles from the Russian rail line, in position to deliver the Coup de Grace to the Russian right wing. On the 7th, there was

Appendix-6

a brief operational pause in preparation for a general assault. When operations resumed on the 8th, the opportunity had passed and when the attack went forward, the Russian right wing had been re-inforced and the Russian Center had pulled back<sup>75</sup>. The Japanese had either failed or were unable to make the necessary effort to achieve the long sought envelopment of the Russians, despite them being demoralized and in retreat.

#### Appendix-6

# THE THEATER OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905

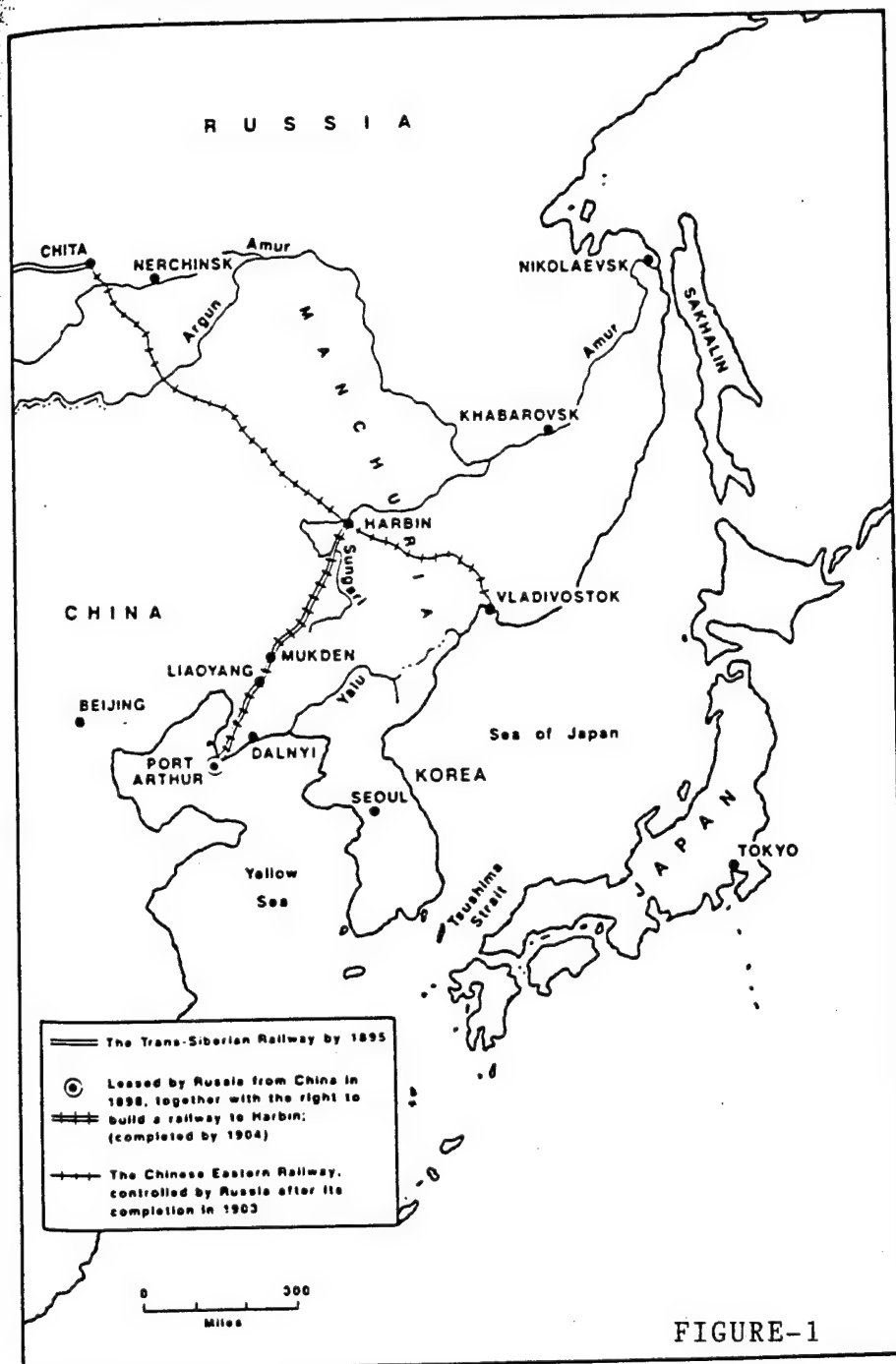


FIGURE-1

\* Department of Strategy and Policy, Naval War College, Handout

B36.457

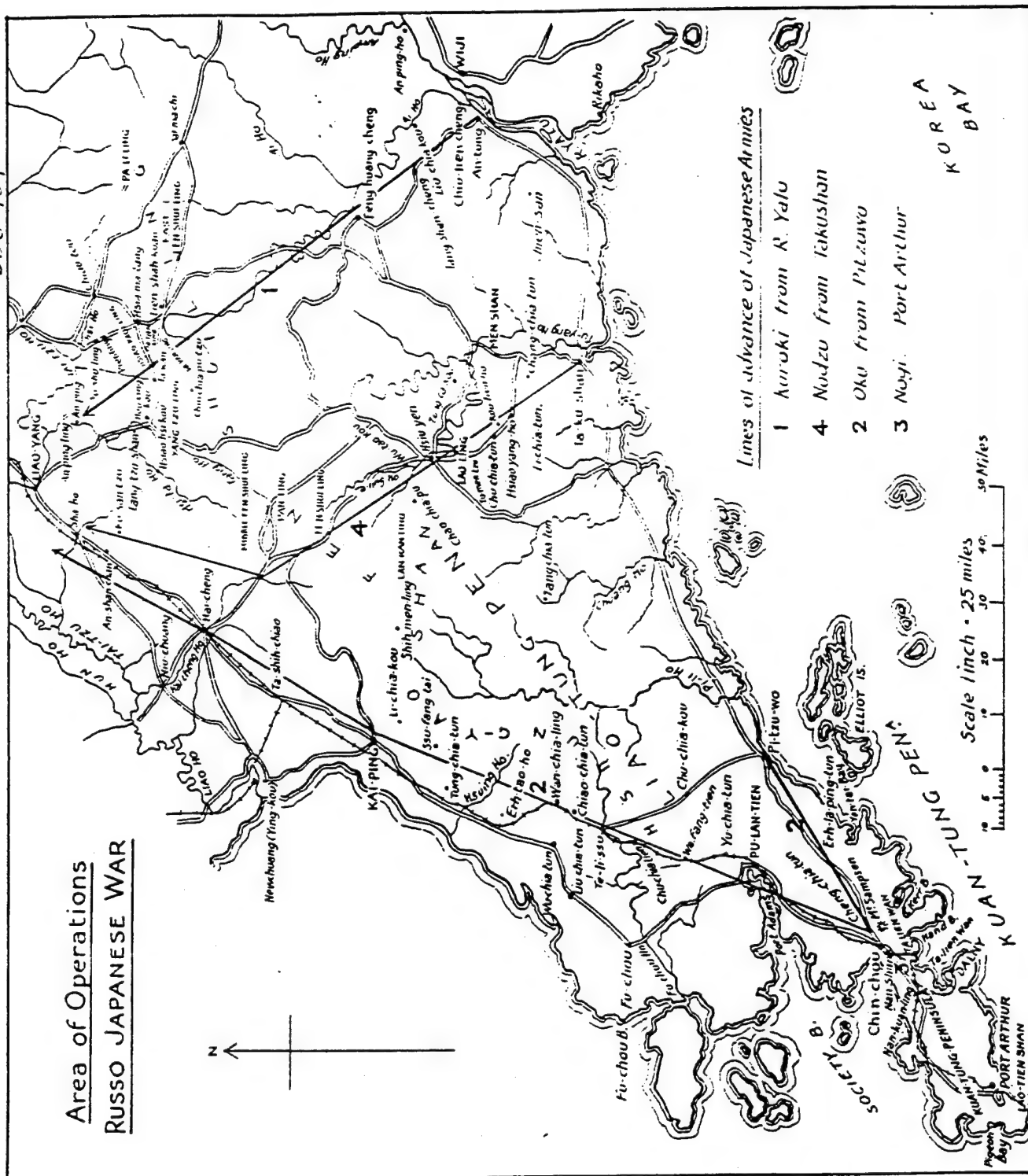


FIGURE-2

Kearsey, A., A Study of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russo-Japanese War-1904, Aldershot: Gale and Pond Ltd, London.





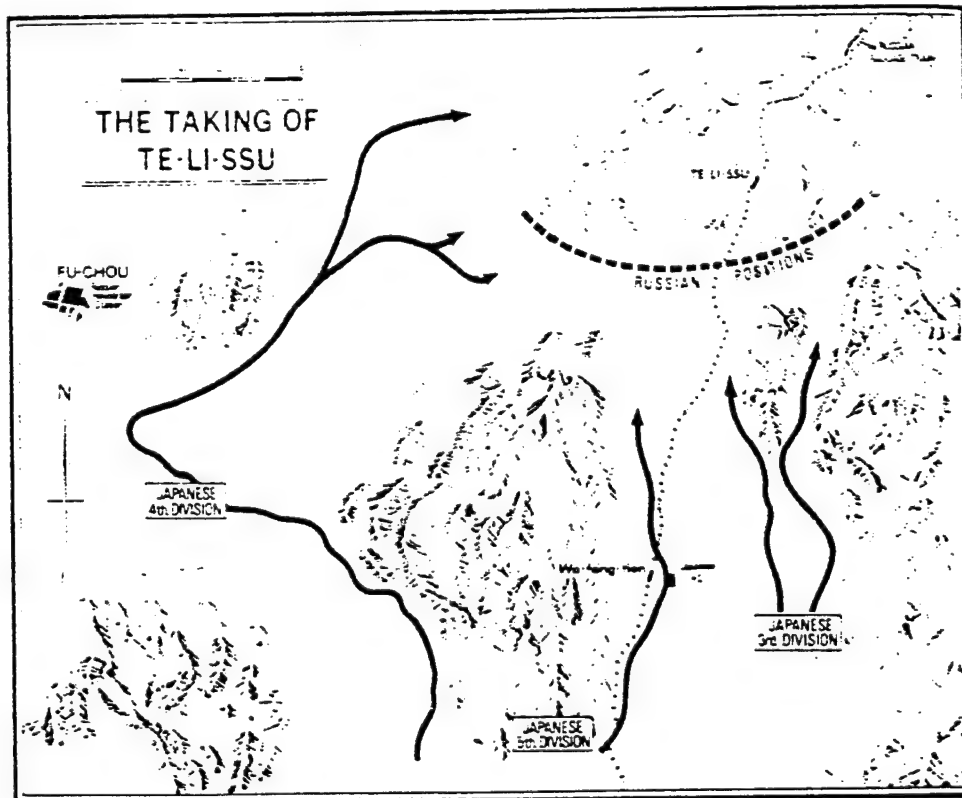
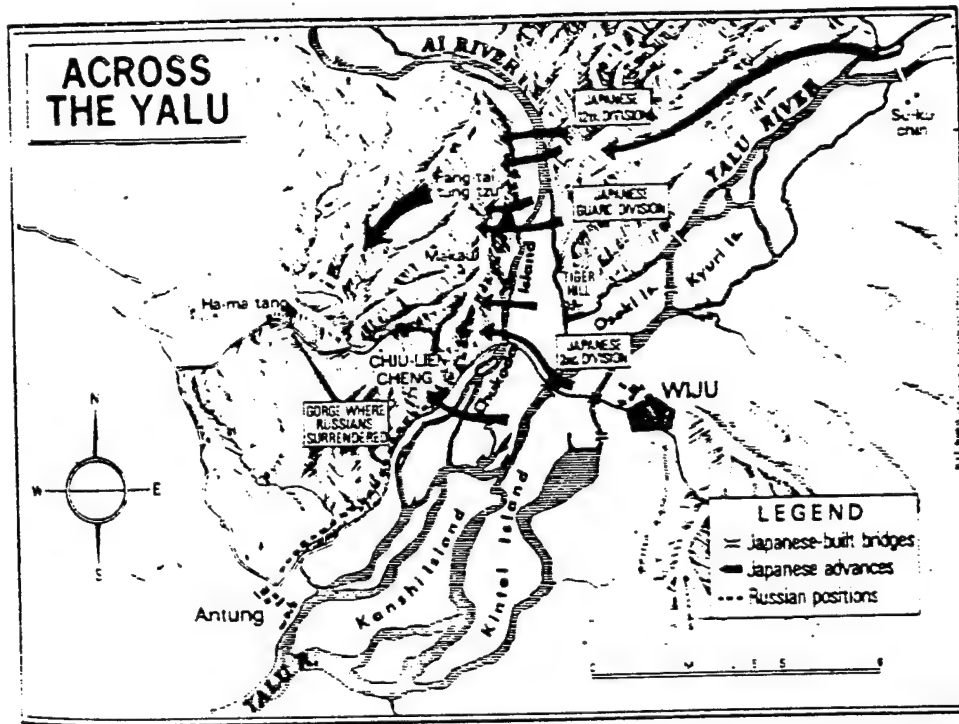


FIGURE-4

Ibid, 259,314

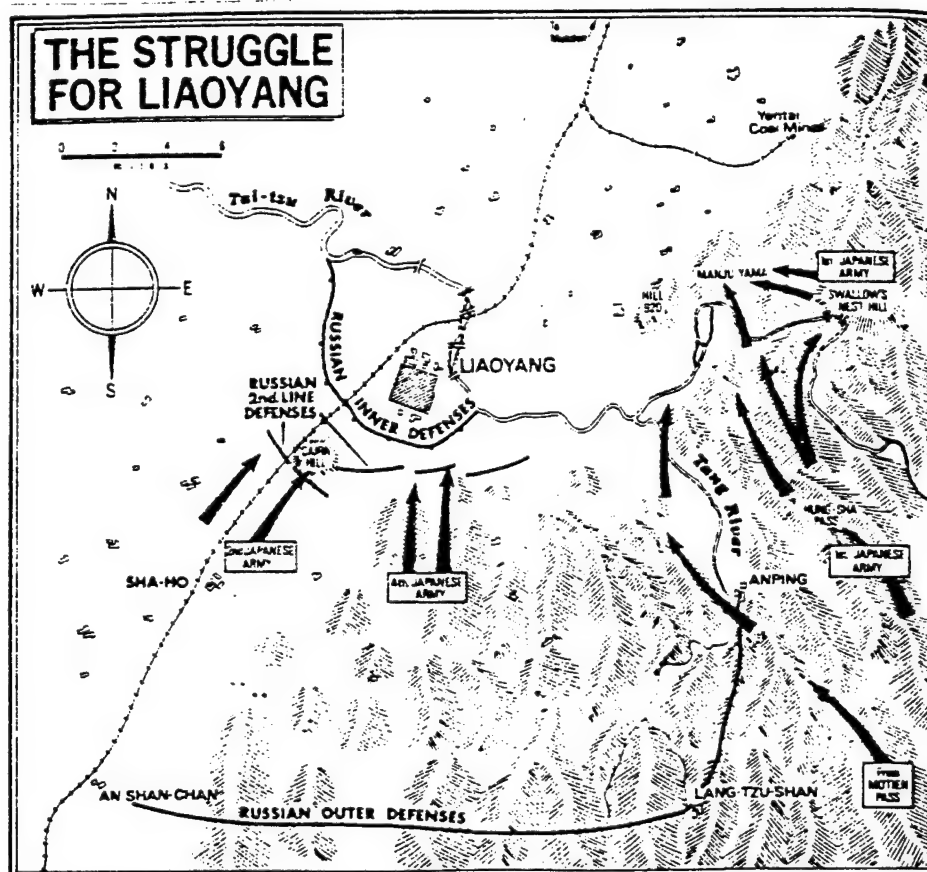
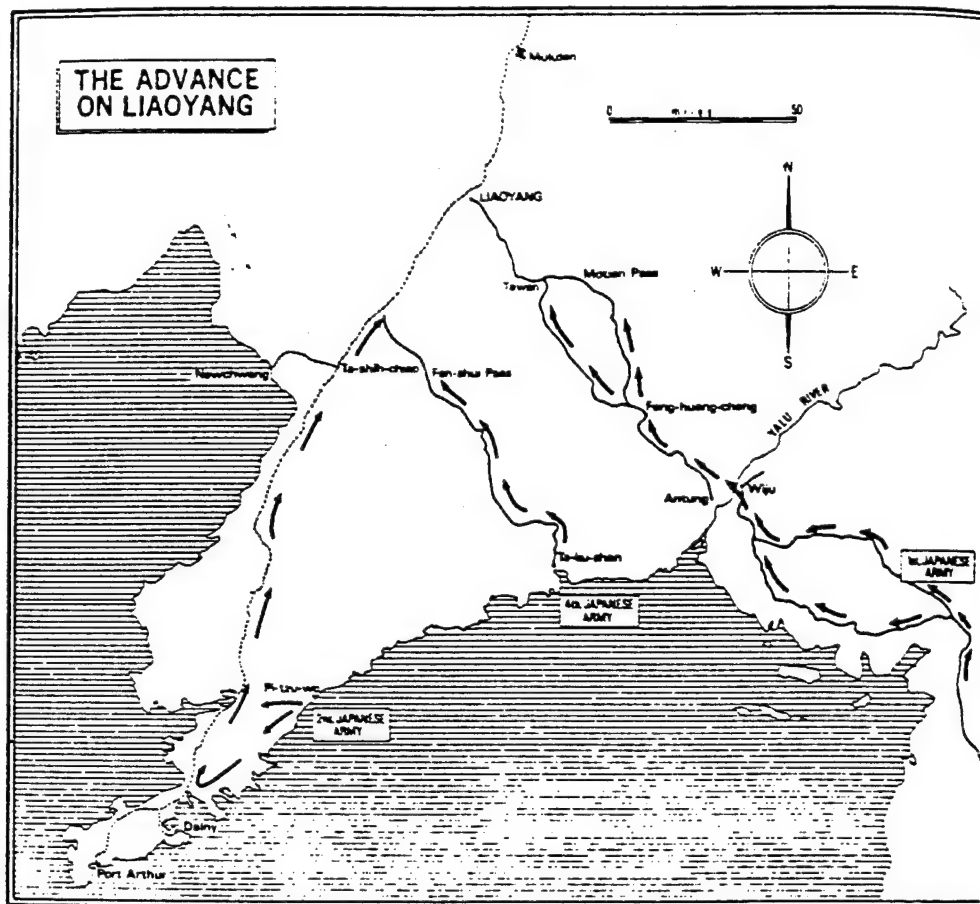


FIGURE-5

# Planche N° 134

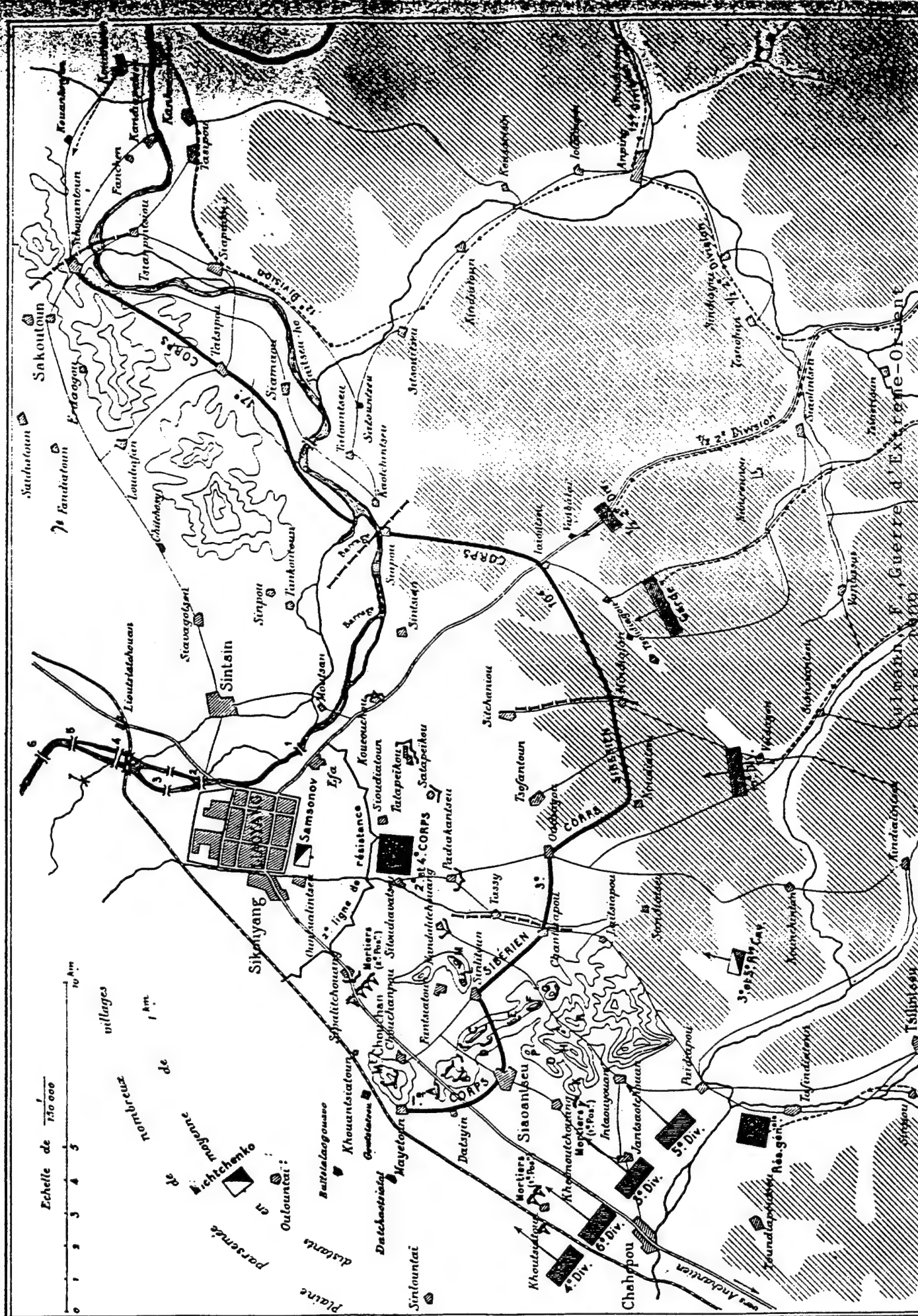
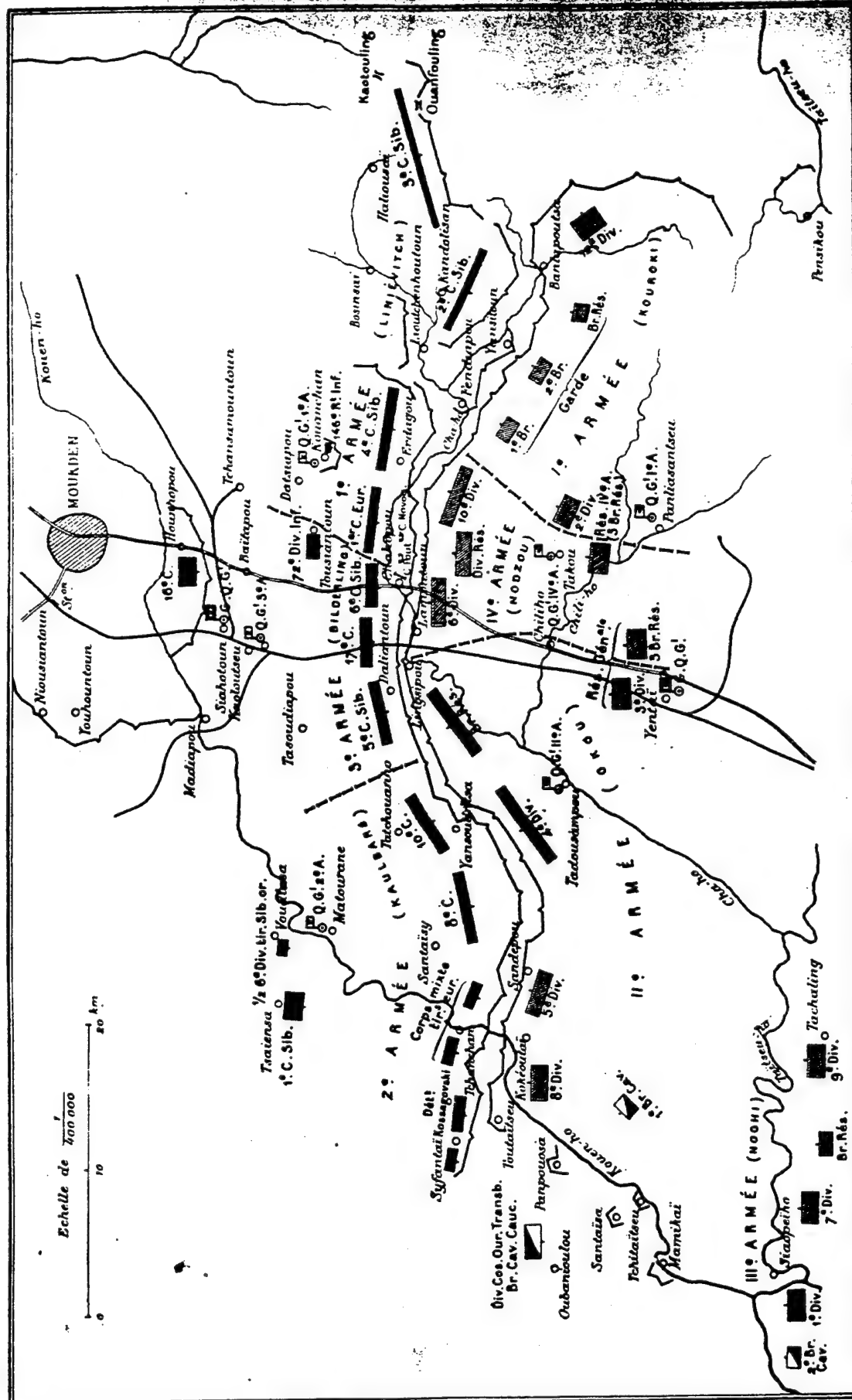


FIGURE-6.



## BATAILLE DE MOUKDEN

*Situation des forces principales le 20 Février*



*Extrait de la Guerre Russo-Japonaise par le Com' Meunier.*

FIGURE-8

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1. Korea is very mountainous and easily defended. Once in Japanese control and as long as the Japanese held control of the seas, it is highly unlikely that Russia would ever put forth the magnitude of effort necessary to dislodge Japan. So even if the war had continued and Russia made good its Manchurian losses, it is unlikely that Port Arthur (sustained by sea) or Korea would have been overwhelmed due to the level of effort that would have been required

Corbett, Julian S. MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905. 2 VOLUMES, Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994, 65.

2. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol I 42.

3. The Trans-Siberian railway, begun in 1891, extended from Vladivostock, through Manchuria to European Russia, almost 5,500 miles. In the early phase of the war, this supply line was not yet completed around the southern end of Lake Baikal, thereby restricting the volume of traffic that could be moved.

4. The Japanese planned to seize Korea, as their most important objective, before the Russians were capable of preventing it and establish a defensive position so strong as to make it practically impregnable to a force sent against it. It was important for Japan to seize permanent sea control to not only endure its own lines of supply but to make its position in Korea that much stronger and unassailable and to restrict the Russians to its single limited line of supply by the Trans-Siberian railway, making unlimited escalation problematic for the Tsar.

Corbett, Julian S. MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905. 2 VOLUMES, Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994. 66.

5. At the same time the Russians had a clear vision of how they expected the campaign to proceed. As minister of War, Kuropatkin wrote about the anticipated campaign:

- "1. Struggle of the fleets for command of the sea
2. Japanese landings, and operations to prevent them
3. Defensive operations, accompanied by guerilla and delaying actions, until sufficient forces are concentrated
4. Assumption of the offensive
  - a. expulsion of the Japanese from Manchuria
  - b. expulsion of the Japanese from Korea
5. Invasion of Japan; defeat of the Japanese territorial troops; operations against a popular uprising"



Warner, Denis and Peggy. THE TIDE AT SUNRISE: A HISTORY OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905. New York: Charterhouse, 1974. 174.

Despite General Kuropatkin's belief in their inevitable victory, his greatest weakness was his fear of defeat. Like most Russian senior officers he was a bureaucrat, who as a group, were inclined to avoid doing things that would result in criticism from above. Thus they were risk adverse. and unwilling to allow junior officers independence of action. Thus Kuropatkin would be inclined to be over cautious throughout the campaign.

6. The Japanese campaign plan, was primarily devised by General Kodama, the Vice Chief of the General Staff to General Oyama, the Japanese Army Chief of Staff, who exercised overall operational command of the land forces during the war.

Warner, Denis and Peggy. THE TIDE AT SUNRISE: A HISTORY OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905. New York: Charterhouse, 1974, 150.

7. The opening move of the Japanese campaign was synchronized to coincide with the arrival of two new Japanese Heavy Cruisers in the Pacific Theater, while the Russian re-inforcing squadron was still far away near Djibouti.

Westwood, J.N., RUSSIA AGAINST JAPAN 1904-05, State University of New York Press, 1986, 34.

.

8. There is some evidence to indicate that the Japanese were aware of General Kuropatkin's pre-war plan that advocated the concentration of Russian forces near Liaoyang until strong enough to assume the offensive.

9. The roads in Manchuria are few and poor. The Japanese plan of campaign therefore necessitated a dispersion of force over a wide front.

10. Oyama had been an observer with the Prussians during the Franco-Prussian War, and hoped to achieve a repeat of the Prussian victory over the French at Sedan. General Kuropatkin, the Russian CINC, was an observer with the French at Sedan, some of his actions may have been as equally influenced by that experience.

Westwood, J.N., RUSSIA AGAINST JAPAN 1904-05, State University of New York Press, 1986, 31.

11. Japan was going to have to fight with the ships they currently had available. Japanese Naval losses could not be replaced due to laws of neutrality and lack of their own industrial capability. Ibid, 34.

12. To do this, he attempted to sink merchant ships in the channel, while the Russian Squadron was in the inner harbor, thereby physically confining them inside Port Arthur. These attempts met with only partial success, narrowing, but not blocking the channel. Second, he planted hundreds of mines in the approaches to the port.

13. Togo knew the Russians still had a large fleet in Europe, that was making preparations to sail for the Pacific. He hoped to deter the Russians from going to Vladivostok, where they would be relatively safe until additional Russian Navy units arrived from Europe to tip the naval balance heavily in the Russian's favor. So as long as the Russians could be induced to stay in Port Arthur, and not interfere with the Japanese plans, Togo was more that content to keep them there and not seek to engage them.

Corbett, Julian S. MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905. 2 VOLUMES, Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994. Volume II.

14. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. RETROSPECT UPON THE WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND RUSSIA, in Naval Administration and Warfare, Boston Little Brown, 1908.

15. Port Arthur held a special psychological position for both the Japanese and the Russians but especially so for the Japanese. One of the absolute objectives of the war, demanded by Japanese public opinion, was the restoration of Port Arthur to Japanese control. In Japanese minds at the end of the war, Port Arthur must become Japanese territory to redeem the humiliation of 1895. Holding the fortress at the end of the war, when the peace treaty would be negotiated, would make it more likely to become Japanese, than if the Russians had held out.

16. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol II, 81.

17. Though Port Arthur would not likely be the base of operations, for the Russian Baltic fleet due to its increasing vulnerability to land attack, there were still 5 battleships in Port Arthur that could have been added to the Baltic fleet. The entire Japanese Navy had only 4 first class battleships. The combined weight of Russian forces would almost inevitably lead to the defeat of the Japanese forces at sea, and the Russians

seizing control of the sea.

18. In the end, the Russians held out until the end of December 1904, with the Russian Fleet safely in the harbor until the Japanese capture of 203 meter hill on December 5, 1904. From that position the Japanese were able to employ 11 inch guns and by 9 December 9th, sink the majority of the Russian squadron in place.

19. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol II, 67-68.

20. With the eventual fall of Port Arthur and the destruction of the Pacific squadron in December 1904, Japan gained temporary unchallenged control of the sea. The approaching Baltic Squadron, would have to face the Japanese fleet alone and had only one base as a destination.

21. After its surprise attack and blockade of the Russian squadron at Port Arthur, and the destruction of two Russian Cruisers at Chemulpo (modern Inchon), the Japanese felt their line of communication secure enough to proceed with the landing on the west coast of Korea.

22. General Kuroki and his staff, arrived in Korea on March 17th to take command of the 1st Army.

23. At Yalu, successful execution of this plan, resulted in the Russians abandoning their position and withdrawing along their line of communication toward Liaoyang. The Russian Commander, had been ordered to delay the Japanese crossing and to observe the Japanese army but was not to engage in major or unequal combat, but was to retire slowly, keeping in touch with the enemy, to essentially fight a rear guard action. The Japanese vigorously pursued the retiring Russian forces and engaged the Russian rear guard, inflicting heavy casualties and eventually capturing the Russian rear guard.

24. During this operation the Japanese laid a cable from Korea to their landing position so that they were able to have **telegraphic communication** from the battlefield to the Imperial quarters in Tokyo.

25. Also, it was being supplied primarily by sea, with relatively short land lines of communication, whereas any Russian force that was sent against it would have had to traverse the mountains and obtain it's supply along the poor Manchurian roads far from the Russian railway line. It was unlikely that the Russians could keep a large body of troops supplied far from the railway

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official

History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910.

26. At Telissu, the Russian made an aborted and half-hearted attempt at taking the offensive on the Liaotung Peninsula, but failed to execute their plan and in event, withdrew in the face of Japanese attacks, toward Liaoyang.

27. Initially only the 10th Division under Lieutenant General Kawamura. By the 16th of July the 4th Army had been strengthened and General Nodzu assumed command.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol II, 238.

28. Kuropatkin's original intention, was that his advanced forces at the Yalu and near Telissu, would fight delaying actions while he consolidated his army at Liaoyang, and received reinforcements from European Russia. At the right time, once he had sufficient strength, he intended to go over to the offensive and the advanced Russian units that had been his rear guard or delaying units, would then become his own advanced guard.

29. Command of Russian forces was increasingly complicated. Kuropatkin had command of the field army, but Viceroy Alexsiev had command of the units guarding the Russian line of communication, so some Divisions diverted from the front line Corps to protect the line of communication over Kuropatkin's protest.

However, by the end of July, the Russian Army had grown to the point where it was beyond Kuropatkin's ability to effectively manage. So it was re-organized by formation of a 1st and 2nd Manchurian Armies instead of a single army. Kuropatkin retained overall command of the Army Group, as well as personal command the 1st Manchurian Army. General Grippenbergh was given command of the 2nd Manchurian army.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 2, 450.

30. Had the Russian fleet not been in Port Arthur, is likely that it would have been treated just as any other land fortress. The Japanese would have probably put a blocking force on the peninsula near Nanshan and freed the majority of divisions of the Japanese 3rd army to join the other forces in northern Manchuria much earlier, possibly providing enough weight in the early battles for a **decisive victory**. Thus the Japanese were forced to attempt their strategy with insufficient numbers. also they were constrained by terrain which did not allow them sufficient room

to maneuver large formations of troops.

Ibid 412.

31. On the Russian side, General Kuropatkin was also preparing to fight the battle he had planned for, on ground of his choosing, and in prepared defensive positions. He had ordered the Russian forces prepare two lines of strong defensive positions around Liaoyang and he was now receiving constant stream of reinforcements.

32. The total Russian strength at the battle of Liaoyang was about 229 thousand soldiers, of which 158 thousand were combatants. The Japanese total strength was about 125 thousand men divided between the first, second, and fourth armies. The battle took place in four phases; the first phase was from the initial attack by the Japanese until the Russian retirement to their prepared advanced positions. The second phase was from the Japanese assault on the advanced positions until the Russian retirement to their main defensive position. The third phase was the Japanese assault on the main position in an attempt to envelop and cut the Russian line of communication, as well as the Russian counter attack against the Japanese 1st army. The fourth phase was the general retreat of the Russian army ordered by Kuropatkin and the rear guard action.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 2, 12.

33. Oyama had lost about one-sixth of his strength during the battle of Liaoyang and the strain to meet the number of men required to replace those losses was exceeding the ability of Japan to provide reinforcements.

The Japanese preparations during September 1904 consisted of bringing forward reinforcements and fortifying the position that they currently held, against a possible counterattack by the Russians, while they prepared for their next offensive phase

34. It is interesting to note that this role reversal occurred after the Japanese forces had succeeded in concentrating their armies and not previously when they were isolated and presumably more subject to being attacked by the Russians and possibly destroyed in detail

Corbett, Julian S. MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905. 2 VOLUMES, Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994. Vol 2, 237.

35. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol , 230.

36. Ibid. Vol 2, 508.

37. Ibid. Vol 2, 512.

38. Ibid. Vol 3.

39. Ibid. Vol 3, 9.

40. The 1st Manchurian Army was under General Lineivich (5 corps), the 2nd Manchurian army under General Grippenbergh (4 corps) and the 3rd Manchurian army under General Kaulbas (4 corps. Kuropatkin retained command as the overall Army Group commander but no longer held command of an individual army.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 3, 10.

41. Despite the general inactivity of the main force during these months, the Russians did attempt a major cavalry **raid** in mid-January, utilizing 7,500 cavalry with main objective being to interdict the Japanese line of communication on the Liaotung peninsula. This was meant to disrupt Japanese reinforcements, or least slow the re-deployment of the 3rd Army to the north. The raid had limited tactical success and actually only succeeded in accelerating the movement of the 3rd Army, which had been resting and recuperating after the strain of the siege.

42. This was to be only a prelude to the coming civil unrest that would rack the Empire and sap Russian morale and the will of the people to continue the war.

Crankshaw, Edward. THE SHADOW OF THE WINTER PALACE, RUSSIAS DRIFT TO REVOLUTION 1825-1917, The Viking Press, 1976.

43. He could a maintain defensive position, retreat north and continue to await re-inforcements until accumulating overwhelming strength, or attack before 3rd Army could join Oyama. Doing nothing was not a real option, the government, eager for good news to do something to help stem the growing discontent and civic unrest in the Empire, urged Kuropatkin to attack.

44. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 3, 1.



45. The Japanese knew this was likely to be their last opportunity and the arrival of the 3rd Army and creation of the 5th Army, gave them the most favorable balance of forces they were ever going to be able to achieve.

The strain on the Japanese ability to send fresh reserves to the field was showing, casualty rates were beginning to exceed the ability of Japan to provide trained replacements, while the Russians simply continued to grow stronger.

Westwood, J.N., RUSSIA AGAINST JAPAN 1904-05, State University of New York Press, 1986

46. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 3, 705.

47. The 3rd Army had actually marched north because the rail line was fully taxed moving ammunition, heavy guns, and supplies.

48. Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 3, 716

49. Ibid Vol 3, 721.

50. Though little change occurred in Manchuria during summer 1905, the Japanese now in control of the sea, made use of that advantage to invade and capture Sakhalin Island with an expeditionary force in July 1905. The effect was to strike another psychological blow at Russian will and to add another bargaining chip at the peace table.

51. No where was this more clear and damaging than the squabbling amongst the senior officers within the fortress of Port Arthur

52. By commencing operations at the proper time, it enabled the Japanese to manipulate world opinion, to muster maximum advantage in land and naval strength, and amplified the weakness of the Russian supply line. From a military point of view the Army was ready to move and nothing was to be gained by waiting. a delay only increased the chances the Russians would move forces to the Yalu or into Northern Korea, making occupation more difficult. There was also the chance more Russian ships would be sent to the far east.

53. They achieved this through execution of limited offensives, seizing Port Arthur, Korea, parts of Manchuria and Sakhalin Island, and by fomenting revolt inside the Russian Empire.

54. The Russians felt compelled to hold it and as long as they did it was a threat poised at the rear of the Japanese army position that must be neutralized but more importantly, provided haven for the Russian fleet. However, it also tied up 50,000 troops that may have been better utilized early on by Kuropatkin in the north and ultimately retaining Port Arthur led to the destruction of the Russian fleet in port, with little compensatory loss to the Japanese fleet. The Japanese for their part were compelled by public fervor to take Port Arthur as the symbol of their national humiliation in 1895. This led to huge losses in frontal assaults on the battlefield, when a blocking position at Nanshan, would have isolated Port Arthur just as well and freed the 3rd Army under Nogi to fight in the north, where they may have been sufficient to lead to a significant Russian defeat at Liaoyang.

55. The concerns Russia had in Europe, with the Germans, Austrians and Ottomans, made it impossible to send its entire armed forces against Japan.

56. Kuropatkin, General A.N., THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE JAPANESE WAR, 2 Volumes, London, J Murray, 1909, 35.

57. Japan had a well developed intel net headed by Colonel Akashi Motojiro. He penetrated the Russian Ministry of defense and was able to obtain classified documents. He was fully cognizant of Russian troop movements to the far east.

Throughout the war the Russians had difficulty in obtaining information about the movements of the main Japanese forces. Their cavalry (Primarily Cossacks) proved especially ineffective at reconnaissance, on the other hand the Japanese spy network and Cavalry provided accurate and valuable information about the Russian movements and disposition.

Warner, Denis and Peggy. THE TIDE AT SUNRISE: A HISTORY OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905. New York: Charterhouse, 1974.

58. After the initial surprise attack, with the exception of a short period under the command of Admiral Makarov, the Russian fleet was dispirited and inert.

59. Corbett, Julian S. MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-1905. 2 VOLUMES, Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994, 339.

60. Kuropatkin, General A.N., THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE JAPANESE WAR, 2 Volumes, London, J Murray, 1909, 33.



61. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. RETROSPECT UPON THE WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND RUSSIA, in Naval Administration and Warfare, Boston Little Brown, 1908, 142.

62. Ibid. 156.

63. Massie, Robert K., DREADNOUGHT: BRITAIN, GERMANY AND THE COMING OF THE GREAT WAR, Random House, 1991, 171.

64. Ibid, 474.

65. Negrier, General de, LESSONS OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, Hugh Rees Ltd, 1906, 54-56.

66. The Japanese used father and son from the same Chinese to be sent on recon. Then compare their stories when they return. The Chinese knowing fully well that a poor report will result in death

Ibid, 59.

67. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. RETROSPECT UPON THE WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND RUSSIA, in Naval Administration and Warfare, Boston Little Brown, 1908, 173.

68. Warner, Denis and Peggy. THE TIDE AT SUNRISE: A HISTORY OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905. New York: Charterhouse, 1974. 480.

69. On the 20 September 1904, the gap at lake Baikal was finally closed, and traffic began passing over the line by October 3rd. Thus, the tide of the campaign was in danger of going over to the Russians, who had improved their line of communication, had amassed superior strength, and had an exhausted and not yet replenished Japanese army in front of them.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 2, 450.

70. At this point, the paramount strategic factor was sea command, control the local waters. It was upon the control of the local waters that the whole Japanese campaign plan depended and the very existence of the armies.

71. Kuropatkin had considered retreating beyond Mukden despite the fact the loss of prestige that would have cost him by surrendering the historic capital of Manchuria without a fight, but he had been so impressed by the Japanese efforts at Liaoyang, and the exhaustion of his own forces that he was prepared to retreat north of Mukden, However the pause provided him during September, allowed him to consolidate his position to reinforce himself more quickly than the Japanese and to actually make preparations to go over to the offensive south of Mukden. While continuing to prepare or improve the defensive positions in Mukden. Kuropatkin's deliberations went through a transition from an idea of passive defense to one of active defense, and finally to a definite plan of attack during this time period.

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Official History (Naval and Military) of the Russo-Japanese War in Three Volumes, London:Harrison and Sons, 1910, Vol 2, 243.

72. Ibid. Vol 2, 492.

73. Ibid. Vol 3, 216.

74. Up till 24 February, Kuropatkin had been preparing to launch another attack in the West against the Japanese left, this was abandoned in favor of re-enforcing in the east for 4 days. Until he realized the real threat was in the west and that the 3rd Army was actually operating there.

Ibid. Vol 3, 696.

75. Ibid. Vol 3, 714.